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ABSTRACT

For at least 90 years there have been contributions to onomastics from the fields of social psychology and personality. These contributions have included work on various types of names, such as ambiguous, alias, hypocoristic, junior, nickname, surname, and unique name. Other research has focused on the structure of names, style of usage, and style of address. Recent applied research has been directed to stereotypes of specific names, popularity, school achievement, ethnic stereotypes, attribution theory, personality aspects, and signature size. (One-hundred and fifty-six references are attached.) (Author/RAE)

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Social Psychological Aspects of Personal-Naming

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Abstract

For at least 90 years there have been contributions to onomastics from the fields of social psychology and personality. These contributions have included work on various types of name, such as ambiguous, alias, hypocoristic, junior, nickname, surname, and unique name. Other research has focused on the structure of names, style of usage, and style of address. Recent applied research has been directed to stereotypes of specific names, popularity, school achievement, ethnic stereotypes, attribution theory, personality aspects, and signature size. There are 141 references cited.

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Social Psychological Aspects of Personal-Naming

Edwin D. Lawson

The purpose of this review is to show some of the contributions of social psychology to onomastics. There are several sections: Introduction and Basic Name Terms; Background History; Further Types of Name; Structure, Style, Address, and Usage; Change of Name; Recent Theoretical Views; Recent Applied Research; Newer Research Approaches, and Conclusions.

The rationale for inclusion of material was that: (1) it was available through a library or through inter-library loan, (2) met the criterion of being a contribution or psychology in a broad sense, and (3) would be of potential interest to the scholar.

One needs to work on names for only a short time before realizing how many disciplines are involved in studying various aspects of onomastics. The range is from art to zoology with everything in between. Scholars in most disciplines are mainly aware of what their own discipline is doing without much thought of other fields. I myself was quite unaware that there even was an American Name Society until some of my research caught Kelsie Harder's eye. I joined the Society and have been an enthusiastic member ever since. One main reason is that I can see how much work from other disciplines contributes to the understanding of the psychological aspects of names. I can only hope that this feeling is reciprocated by those in other disciplines about psychological contributions to their understanding.

In thinking about work on names, most people probably think

primarily of the fields of literature, language, or linguistics. This is justified, but it is also true that other disciplines have made significant contributions as well, disciplines such as anthropology, history, law, psychology, and public health.

Before going further, it might be wise to define some of the terms used in this review and in the items cited. In this review the term name will be taken to refer to first name unless otherwise specified.

Personal name. Some scholars use this as a general term to include first name and surname and, probably, middle name as well. Others reserve the term only for the first name.

First Name. The example would be John as in John Q. Public. First names are also referred to, depending on the writer, as forenames, given names, christian names, and baptismal names.

Middle Name. As John Quincy Public. Sometimes called second name.

Surname. As John Q. Public. The surname is also referred to as last name, patronym, and family name.

Nickname. As calling John Q. Public Red or Torchy because of his red hair. Also referred to as an eke-name or sobriquet. Unfortunately, the term nickname is not standardized and some writers use the term to other forms such as Bobby, which is really an affectionate form, or Bob, which is a hypocoristic form.

Affectionate, Familiar Names. Johnny Q. Public would be the relevant example. Some writers call this the affectionate form, others familiar or adolescent. The affectionate form tends to be

used more in the family; more for girls than for boys; and, of course, for politicians and entertainers.

Hypocoristic Name. Also referred to as a short name or an abbreviated name. Examples are Bill, Jim, Ed, Dot, Meg, Marge.

Unique Name. A name that is different from others. Also called unusual, peculiar, singular, low frequency or uncommon. A rule of thumb might be a name that occurs less than once out of 500 times in a random population sample. Current examples are Kermit, Millard, and Uriel for males; Aqua, Aspen, and Darla for females.

For this review, social psychology has been taken to include some aspects of educational psychology, clinical psychology, and psychoanalysis. Contributions on names from areas such as experimental psychology, and learning, memory, and cognition, though fascinating, have not. For a good introduction to the psychological aspects of names, the reader should consult Holt (1939) for excellent coverage to that date. Other background information from the social sciences as whole can be found in Lawson (1984; 1986). For an annotated bibliography, Lawson (1987) may be consulted.

BACKGROUND HISTORY

In presenting the background of research on names in psychology, one should recognize the tremendous influence that psychoanalysis and anthropology have also had on the development of names research especially in the period before World War II.

The first mention of names by a psychologist seems to that of the famous educator G. Stanley Hall (1898). In a discussion

of the sense of self, he listed and commented on a number of nicknames, baby names, and hypocoristic names, but no systematic research was done. After a gap of about fifteen years, three studies appeared out of the Wundt/Titchener structuralist tradition (this was the approach which emphasized the individual's conscious subjective reactions to stimuli). Kollarits (1914), English (1916), and Alspach (1917) were all concerned with the images aroused by various stimuli. Alspach's work was quite imaginative and probably ahead of its day. Meaningless names such as Gronch, Spren, and Drup were created. Respondents then described associated personality characteristics. The conclusion was that sound is an important determinant of the social perception of names. DeLaski (1918) continued this line of research with a psychological analysis of Dickens' characters.

Representing the traditional American interest in learning and memory, Mulhall (1915) worked on recall of names associated with photographs. The Chinese scholar, Lo (1925), used the correlational approach to conclude that the more meaningful the name, the more famous the person tended to be. A few years later, Clarke (1934) demonstrated that names were easier to recall than faces. A somewhat different approach is represented by Longstaff (1936) who investigated possible names for a new tooth powder, showing an industrial application of psychological techniques.

In addition to the interest in first names, some interest in nicknames developed. Orgel and Tuckman (1935), working with

institutionalized children, concluded that nicknames are a source of much unhappiness. However, Habbe (1937) found just the opposite with normal schoolboys.

In the area of developmental psychology, Davis (1937) concluded that as the child gets older, the practice of naming people and places in daily life tends to drop off. Allport and Schanck (1936) turned their attention to college students and the potency of attitudes toward name. They learned that students were more willing to fight for an insult to their name than for defense of their property. In his first famous textbook on personality, Allport (1937) considered that one's name is the most important anchor point for selfhood. In the same year, Walton (1937) reported the first really systematic evaluation of first names. He used the methods of paired comparisons and absolute judgments to measure male and female names.

The undergraduate thesis of Holt Studies in the Psychology of Names represents a high level of scholarship. Beginning with a comprehensive review of the name literature in the social sciences, it reports two separate investigations on ethnic name stereotyping, and finally, describes interviews with men and women on name changing. Again, a study that seems ahead of its day.

The research on stereotypes of Schoenfeld (1942) followed somewhat the approach of Walton and Holt. Schoenfeld's results give evidence that stereotypes of personality characteristics are associated with specific names. Finally, there are the contributions of Allen, Brown, Dickinson, and Pratt (1941) and

Finch, Kilgren, and Pratt (1944). The Allen work concluded that men possess and prefer more common; women, less common names. In addition, women tend to be more dissatisfied with either common or very unusual names. The Finch study confirmed that of Allen and also measured affectionate and hypocoristic names.

This ends the background material of psychological research to the end of World War II. We can now turn attention to research associated with different types of name.

FURTHER TYPES OF NAME

While there was a brief description of some of the more common name terms at the beginning of this review, it seems appropriate to discuss additional types of name. The work of Van Buren (1974) on the derivation and usage of first names, nicknames, affectionate, and hypocoristic names should be mentioned for its usefulness in trying to understand current practices.

Ambiguous Names

During the past few years there has been some shift to names which have been called by some writers, androgynous, by others, ambiguous. Jan is such a name. One cannot immediately tell the sex of the bearer. Of course, we have always had names such as Joy or Marion, or even Shirley, but the number of Lous, Lees, and Pats seems to be increasing. Landman (1974), Rickel and Anderson (1981), and Barry and Harper (1982) have explored this area.

Alias

An alias is a false name that an individual assumes to prevent detection by police authorities. In a study of prisoners

at Joliet, Illinois, Hartman (1951) learned that while 55% of the first-timers used aliases, 97% of the repeaters did. The repeaters also had more personality difficulties.

Hypocoristic Names

The hypocoristic name is a shortened or abbreviated form of the first name as Will for William. The Van Buren and Finch works mentioned above have dealt with hypocoristic names. The research of Lawson (1973) indicates that both men and women preferred hypocoristic names over full first names and affectionate names for males; Lawson and Roeder (1986) with women's names indicates that while women do have some preference for the hypocoristic form, men i. e., Barb, men have a preference for the Barbie form (of Barbara). Drury and McCarthy (1980) interviewed American students at the University of Copenhagen, learning that about a third shortened their names. This name shortening was correlated with a positive attitude toward Denmark and positive self-esteem.

Jr. (Junior)

While the practice of using the suffix Jr. after the name has been going on for some time, its study is relatively recent. Two investigations bear on the practice. Plank's view (1971) is that bestowing a Jr. on a son is evidence that the Hamlet hypothesis is at work, that is, the father wants to perpetuate himself in his son and this is a possible source of conflict. Plank reports that the percentage of Juniors among mental patients at a Veterans Administration hospital is three times the rate for the general population.

In the second investigation with schoolchildren, Busse, Busse, and Busse (1979) learned that boys named for their fathers liked their names as well as other boys; however, girls, named for their mothers, did not. We can only speculate that naming a child after one of the parents may produce heightened identification, frustration, conflict, and, sometimes, aggression.

Nicknames

As mentioned earlier, Hall was the first to call attention to nicknames, followed by the work of Orgel and Tuckman in the 30's. In Denmark, Hansen (1948) related names to feelings of inferiority. Dexter (1949) used a questionnaire to conclude that those with nicknames were more popular. Moses and Freedman (1958) noted that nicknames have a magical function with disturbed children; that names such as Sunny or Chief often seem to act as prescriptions for the role the child is to follow.

Beside the work of Van Buren and Busse et al. already mentioned, there have been several reports from Britain (James, 1979; Morgan, Oneill, & Harre/'/, 1979; Harre/'/, 1980) which have been devoted to nicknames. The Morgan et al. book is entirely on the nicknaming process and includes cross-cultural work. The research demonstrates that the nickname can be understood as a norm, a form of social control, and a form of status.

Surnames

Surnames are what are commonly referred to as last names. Curiously, there are only two investigations by psychologists of

surnames, that of Arthaud, Hohneck, Ramsey, and Pratt (1948) and Razran (1950). The Arthaud research compared (1) monosyllabic vs. dissyllabic surnames (Reeves vs. Scovill), and (2) names in the original language vs. the anglicized version (Bauer vs. Bower). Monosyllabic and anglicized names were preferred (with some qualifications).

Razran was interested in measuring ethnic prejudice. He used a sophisticated design to evaluate how the surname affects the observer's perception of the beauty, intelligence, and emotionality of young women.

Unique Names

Unique or unusual names have been the source of some controversy. Savage and Wells (1948) with college students, Ellis and Beechley (1954), Hartman, Nicolay, and Hurley (1968), and Bagley and Evan-Wong (1970) with clinical populations, concluded that a unique name predisposed to poorer adjustment. However, the evidence seems clearer for males than for females. Eagleson and Clifford (1945) reported that black women had no significantly higher percentage of unique names than did Whites.

However, there is another side to the issue of unique names than that they lead to poor adjustment. Houston and Sumner (1948), while reporting that unique names were associated with neuroticism, also found that more of the scholarship holders at Harvard had unique names. Schonberg and Murphy (1974) reported male students (with unique names) performed better on a personality test while no difference was found with females. In a series of investigations, Zweigenhaft (1977a, 1981, 1983) and

Zweigenhaft, Hayes, and Haagen (1980) have provided evidence that unusually named people have scored higher on personality variables and intelligence tests, and also attained higher status. Slightly different results have been reported by Joubert (1983) and Skinner (1984). Joubert (in Alabama) found that men with unique names had as good a chance to graduate with academic honors as others but that women with unique names did not. The Canadian study by Skinner concluded that unique names did not lead to poorer performance. My own feeling is that unusual names act as a type of catalyst; for those who are already strong and/or outstanding, it is an additional prod; however, for those who lack strength or talent, it becomes an additional burden.

STRUCTURE, STYLE, ADDRESS, AND USAGE

Besides the types of name, psychologists have also been somewhat interested in the form and structure of how the name is used.

Length of name

There has been some interest in the effect of length of surname and marital choice for women. Cabe (1967) concluded that women would tend to marry men with shorter surnames since shorter names are preferred. However, subsequent research, more carefully controlled (Cabe, 1968; Finch & Mahoney, 1975) failed to provide confirmation.

Initial letter of surname

Some observers have felt that a person whose surname begins with a letter toward the beginning of the alphabet has a preferred position in school, in employment, and, perhaps, in

other places. Autry (1970), with high school students in Texas, found no significant correlations; Ring (1980), in Germany, concluded that teachers do pay more attention to students whose names are at the beginning of the alphabet; Williams (1985), in a Northern Ireland study, also found superior performance for those whose surnames were early in the alphabet.

Segal (1974) took a somewhat different tack. She found that trainees at the Maryland State Police Training Academy who were assigned rooms and lockers by surname were more likely to develop friendships. Apparently, close proximity of the initial letters of the surname is a factor in friendship formation.

Style

Style in this sense refers to how the individual uses the name. A man might call himself John Public, or John Q. Public or one of several variations. Women who marry have even more possibilities. Wells and Palwick (1950) reported that the most common style was John Q. Public except in the House of Representatives where the John or Jack style was preferred. Hartman (1958) has also reported on name style.

Boshier (1973) showed that New Zealanders preferred the John Public style, that those who showed one name style across all situations were more conservative on a personality test. Replicating the Boshier work in California, Zweigenhaft (1975) found that his sample preferred the John Q. Public style and there were no significant personality differences between those using one style and another.

Farley did her research with women employed at a large university (1970, 1975, 1976) examining the signature pattern of married women returning to the work force. She concluded that those with higher status and motivation tend to sign their own names without the title of Miss or Mrs. Dion (1987), in Canada, concluded that women who use the Ms. title give the impression of being more achievement-oriented, socially assertive, and dynamic but lacking in interpersonal warmth.

Forms of address

Brown and Ford (1961) in a paper which was to have a major influence evaluated patterns of address involving first name (John) vs. title and last name (Mr. Smith), whether used reciprocally with others, or not. The research concluded that a person uses the first name with an intimate of equal status or a subordinate; title and last name are used with a superior or in an equal status interaction with a stranger. Slobin, Miller, and Porter (1968), working with a large insurance firm, confirmed the work of Brown and Ford.

Canadian studies by Kroger (1982), Kroger, Cheng and Leung (1979), Kroger, Wood, and Beam (1984), Kroger, Wood, and Kim (1984) continued the work of Brown and Ford with Canadians, Chinese, and Koreans.

Change of Name

Holt (1939) did the first investigation of name change when he interviewed fifteen married women and five men who had changed their names. Feldman (1975) investigated the relationship between name change and improved economic conditions. She

examined the records of pairs of brothers, one of whom had anglicized his name. The pattern shows an improvement in economic status for the name changers. In another study, Falk (1975) analyzed name changes among immigrants to Israel.

RECENT THEORETICAL VIEWS

Sherif and Cantril (1947) in their well-known Psychology of Ego-Involvements drew from several sources for their description and analysis of naming practices. The discussion of Katz (1955) shows some of the problems people in Europe have with names. Roger Brown's work (1958) gives a psycholinguistic analysis of the naming process. Allport (1961, p. 117) noted that the name is the most important anchor point in one's identity.

Brender's work (1963) approaches the motivational factors in the naming process from various aspects: psychoanalysis, family tradition, religion, fashion, and desire for uniqueness; Dion's contribution (1983) demonstrates the contributions of psychology to concepts of identity and self.

Outstanding are the contributions of Macnamara (1982) and Carroll (1985). Macnamara's book attempts to set up a theory of learning names and is based upon extensive experimental work with children. Carroll's book presents field and laboratory research in naming strategies from a psychological point of view incorporated in a theoretical position. He emphasizes the role of context and isomorphism in naming.

RECENT APPLIED RESEARCH

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are generalized ways of thinking about various

objects, concepts, people, or ideas and have long been studied by social psychologists. It is natural, then, that stereotypes of names be investigated.

In a popular article Marcus (1976) explains the power of the name stereotype and how the perception of a name can alter behavior toward the bearer of that name. Kaufmann (1973), author of a popular textbook in social psychology, recounts his own stereotyping and his initial shock at first hearing the excellent English of Cesar Chavez, the California migrant labor leader. The importance of stereotypes, then, is clear.

Several empirical investigations have been carried out. The work of Razran (1950) with fictitious surnames to measure ethnic prejudice has already been mentioned. In Britain. Sheppard (1963) confirmed the earlier work of Schoenfeld (with first names); Wober (1970) worked with stereotypes of personality characteristics associated with some first names by English schoolgirls.

The development of the semantic differential (Osgood & Suci, 1952; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) led to its application to the measurement of name stereotypes, often in three-dimensional semantic space. Research has confirmed the ability of the semantic differential to measure a relatively large number of names with efficiency (Buchanan & Bruning, 1971; Duffy & Ridinger; 1981; Ellington, Marsh, & Critelli, 1980; Evans, 1983; Lawson, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1980, 1985, in press; Lawson and Roeder, 1986). In my own most recent research, I have evaluated about 1000 names along six dimensions, Good-Bad, Strong-Weak,

Active-Passive, Sincere-Insincere, Intelligent-Dumb, and Emotional-Calm.

Liking/Familiarity/Popularity

McDavid and Harari (1966) in their work with schoolchildren were able to show a relationship between name desirability and sociometric popularity. Other investigations have confirmed the relationship between liking and popularity. Harrison's project (1969) was directed at the relationship between familiarity (exposure) and liking. Further work (Johnson & Staffieri, 1971; Crisp, Apostal, & Luessenheide, 1984) has provided additional confirmation. Also to be mentioned are work from England and Australia (Colman, Hargreaves, & Sluckin; 1980, 1981; Hargreaves, Colman, & Sluckin, 1983). These studies report the inverted U phenomenon most- and least-familiar names) are least attractive), but this is not true with surnames. Busse and Seraydarian (1979) investigating popularity with schoolchildren, used sociometric technique to demonstrate the positive relationship between first name desirability and popularity, This result was clearer with girls than with boys.

Developmental patterns

How early can the process of name stereotyping begin? Bruning and Husa (1973) showed that children were able to rate names as early as the third grade. Busse and Helfrich (1975) demonstrated the stability of name stereotypes with children in grades 2-11. With college students, Knechtel (1973) was able to conclude that first names do influence life roles to some extent.

School Achievement

Among the more important questions concerning stereotypes is whether the first name of the individual will affect the perception of and/or judgments of performance. The investigation of Harari and McDavid (1973) has been very important. They set up a situation where essays purportedly done by 10-year-olds were graded. Each paper had attached the name of a fictitious author depending upon the design of the project. The essays received higher grades when authorship was attributed to someone with a desirable name. However, Seraydarian and Busse (1981) were not able to replicate the work of Harari and McDavid.

In a related investigation, Garwood (1976) had teachers categorize boys' names as either desirable or undesirable. Scores on objective measures of achievement and personality were significantly higher for those in the desirable names group. Nelson (1977) was able to confirm Garwood with women college students, but not with men. Busse and Seraydarian (1978) demonstrated small but significant correlations in elementary and secondary schoolchildren between name desirability and school readiness, IQ, and achievement.

Seits (1981) did a variation on Harari and McDavid using community college English instructors who were asked to grade an essay. Different fictitious names were used. While no relationship was found between name and grade, a relationship was found between name and miscellaneous remarks made on the essay by the instructors, thus providing some confirmation for McDavid and Harari.

Confusing the issue somewhat, Ford, Masters, and Miura

(1984) in two samples, one of children grades 2-11, the other, high school students, concluded that when appropriate methodology was followed that there was no correlation between academic and social competence and frequency or desirability of names. In England, Erwin and Calev (1984) working with college students found that those who were attractively named themselves, gave higher grades than those who were not attractively named. My own conclusion on this is that beginning teachers or evaluators are more influenced by the name of the bearer; more experienced teachers, less so. Perhaps because they have learned better.

Physical attractiveness

Stereotypes of names have even been used in relation to physical attractiveness. Garwood, Cox, Kaplan, & Sulzer (1980) showed that in the selection of a campus beauty queen more votes were given to the candidate with a desirable first name. Tompkins and Boor (1980) used names varying in desirability and photographs varying in attractiveness as stimuli for ratings by men and women teachers on seventh grade boys on a number of dimensions, but the results failed to confirm hypotheses drawn from Harari and McDavid (1973) as did Hensley (1985) with a college sample.

Sex roles and names

The last fifteen years has seen an increasing research interest in the appropriate sex roles for men and women. Bruning and Liebert (1973) were able to show that masculinity-femininity ratings of names correlated significantly with masculinity-femininity ratings of photographs of men and women.

Landman (1974) has commented on the sex-role confusion experienced by those with androgynous names such as Lynn, Leslie, or Dana. Ellington, Marsh, and Critelli (1980) reported that women with masculine names were in the normal range of personality measures. However, women known by more masculine names were less anxious and less neurotic. Other related work in this area was contributed by Kleinke (1974), Garwood, Baer, Levine, Carroll, and O'Neal (1981), Duffy and Ridinger (1981), and Rickel and Anderson (1981).

Ethnic stereotypes

Research by Holt and Razran on ethnic groups as objects of stereotypes has already been referred to. Other aspects of ethnic stereotypes have also been investigated. Meeker and Kleinke (1972) showed how Black, White, and Chicano groups used identifying names such as Whitey or Gringo inside and outside their own ethnic group. In research somewhat related, Busse and Seraydarian (1977) had schoolchildren evaluate on desirability a number of first names categorized into eight ethnic groups. The results indicate that Afro-American names were liked less than those in the other groups. In an investigation with Black, White, and Spanish schoolteachers in Georgia and Florida, Garwood and McDavid (1974) found greater differences by sex and location than by ethnicity. Allen (1983) in a quite different approach shows how personal names such as Mike became a collective term for Irishmen, Ivan for Russians and thus became a measure of social conflict.

Bias

Peters and Ceci (1982) were concerned with bias in the evaluation of manuscripts submitted for publication. Resubmitting the articles to the journals in which they were originally published along with change in the name of the author and institutional affiliation, Peters and Ceci learned that nine were not detected as resubmissions. Of these nine, eight were rejected on various grounds. So much for objective editorial review! However, it is fair to point out that institutional affiliation was also indicated.

Attribution Theory

One of the newer approaches in psychology is attribution theory, where the observer tries to assign responsibility for an act. Busse and Love (1973) presented stories to schoolchildren. In each story the main character had to choose between two courses of action. As anticipated, results confirmed that characters who possessed liked first names were judged right more frequently. Garwood, Gray, Sulzer, Levine, Cox, and Kaplan (1983) went a step further. They investigated not only attribution (responsibility assignment) for the people in their stories but also sanction assignment. Their conclusion was that name and sex were important factors so that less reward was assigned males with undesirable names and less punishment (more leniency) was shown for females with undesirable names.

Personality

While aspects of names and personality have been touched on already, two topics should be considered, self-concept and self-esteem.

Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the individual's perception of his/her own image. To measure this Bugental and Zelen (1950) asked men and women the question "Who are you?" and concluded that name is a central aspect of self-perception. Guardo and Bohan (1971) interviewing children, learned that one's name gives a sense of continuity. Jourard (1974) indicated that the name defines the identity of the individual. Other research along this line was contributed by Lewis and Brooks-Gunn (1979) with infants, and Gordon (1968), with college students.

Self-Esteem

Related to self-concept is self-esteem, the regard the individual has for his/her own worth, especially as perceived from the reactions of others. Eagleson (1946) asked students how well they liked their first names. Most did, although a quarter did not. In France, Plottke (1950) obtained similar results.

In further work, Adelson (1957), in a large systematic investigation on self-acceptance, self-identity, and attitude, concluded that attitudes toward one's name are an important factor. Strunk (1958) showed that college students who liked their names received higher ratings on a personality scale of self-satisfaction. Busse (1980) in a large cross-sectional study with schoolchildren noted that boys like their names more than girls; Blacks more than Whites. Similar research with children has been done in New Zealand by Boshier (1968a, 1968b) and in South Africa by Stru/"/mpfer (1978).

Signature Size

Signature size has also been the subject of research. Zweigenhaft has been the leader in this field (Zweigenhaft, 1970, 1977; Zweigenhaft & Marlowe, 1973), asserting that as the individual's status arose so did size of the signature. While Swanson and Price (1972) have confirmed this view, Mahoney (1973) using personality measures along with the signature did not. Stewart (1977), in Canada continued the interest, demonstrating a relationship between signature size and status. Snyder and Fromkin (1977; 1980) found that those with larger signatures scored higher on a uniqueness scale. Finally, Hendrick, Vincenzo, and Nelson (1973) learned that those students who signed up for an experiment in a more formal setting tended to have more formal signatures.

NEWER APPROACHES IN RESEARCH

Most of the research in this review, although not all, has been of the observational or descriptive sort. Following the scientific approach, the next level of research would be some manipulation of variables, in this case, aspects of names or factors associated with names. A few investigations seem to point the way.

One is the experiment of Garwood et al. (1983) on attribution, mentioned above. Respondents were asked to make a decision about the main character in a decision situation, and to assign sanctions, if appropriate. The design of that research manipulated four factors simultaneously: name desirability, sex, level of responsibility, and assignment of sanctions.

A second experiment by Kleinke and Staneski (1972) evaluated

how people use names in social interaction. The investigators set up ingratiating/dependent situations and noningratiating/independent situations. In the ingratiating/dependent situations, the participant is an applicant for a job; in the non-ingratiating/independent situation, an attractive woman interviews two men. The experimenters concluded that using another's name in the social (independent) situation is perceived more favorably than in the job applicant (dependent) situation.

In a third experiment, Berkowitz and Knurek (1969) first gave participants negative association training to either of the names George or Fred. Then the students were angered by the trainer. The final situation tested how they would react to a discussion partner who bore the critical name. Results showed a displacement of hostility in the direction of the critical name.

Finally, in a related experiment, Leyens and Picus (1973) first angered their participants; next, had them watch a film clip of a fight; then, gave them a chance to give an electric shock to a confederate who had the same name as the figure in the film. Their results, however, did not confirm that aroused hostility would generalize to the confederate with the same name as the figure in the film.

While these experiments do arouse puzzling questions, they are important in that they demonstrate how names as a significant variable can be controlled by an investigator in a research design.

CONCLUSIONS

This review has tried to show some of the ways that psychologists have tried to explore various aspects of names. The field is certainly disorganized and probably chaotic as well. It is clear that some kind of integrating theory is necessary. However, as the number and variety of works cited shows, even if the theory end is not as strong as it might be, the research end is alive and well and the prognosis for the future looks good. Certainly the evidence is that research and scholarly activity continue to be an important area in psychology.

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